FORD TO APPOINT A SPECIAL PANEL FOR C.I.A. INQUIRY

Will Designate a High-Level Commission to Investigate Domestic-Spying Reports

MEETING WITH KISSINGER

President Seeking Facts on Whether Agency Exceeded Its Statutory Authority

1-5-75

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4—President Ford announced today that he would appoint a special commission to investigate possible illegal domestic spying activities by the Central Intelligence Agency.

In a statement issued by the White House, the President said the high-level panel would "determine whether the C.I.A. has exceeded its statutory authority." The panel will have five to seven members.

The President's action came after a long meeting this morning with Secretary of State Kissinger. Mr. Kissinger had met earlier with Richard Helms, the former Director of Central Intelligence, who is now Ambassador to Iran.

Evaluation Sought

In his statement, Mr. Ford said: "I have today established a commission to ascertain and evaluate any facts relating to activities conducted within the United States by the Central Intelligence Agency that give rise to questions as to whether the agency has exceeded its statutory authority."

These questions arose last month when The New York Times published reports of well-placed sources who alleged that the agency had for years conducted spying operations on United States citizens.

The panel was reported to be the proposal of Mr. Kissinger.

Proposal Laid to Kissinger

Ron Nessen, the President's news secretary, said that Mr. Ford had already interviewed several prospective members for the commission. But no appointments have been made yet, he said. The White House further said that the Presidential commission would not preclude separate investigations of the C.I.A. by Congressional committees and probably the Justice Department. The President has ordered the commission to make a report by March 4.

The agency itself produced a report 10 days ago.

Mr. Kissinger left the White House shortly after 1 P.M. He strolled over to a group of reporters gathered outside the West Wing and answered questions briefly before driving away in a limousine.

The Secretary of State said that "on the basis of what I

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now know" there was no reason to dismiss Mr. Helms, who returned to Washington from Teheran last night for what was described as home leave.

The Ambassador will return to his post "eventually," Mr. Kissinger said, noting that he would have to spend a week or more talking with members of Congress and others. Several Congressional investigations have been proposed.

They would focus on allegations, appearing in The New York Times late last month, that the C.I.A. had for several years spied on Americans in this country, a violation of the agency's charter.

Mr. Helms, who was appointed Director of Central Intelligence by President Johnson and served until 1972, has "categorically denied" any illegal spying by the agency when he was in charge of it.

United Press International

Secretary of State Kissinger leaving the White House yesterday after meeting with President Ford.

The C.I.A. report on charges of domestic spying is understood to leave a number of questions unanswered, and it has been suggested that a commission consisting of both Government and non-Government members might pursue them.